ECLIPSE COMICS
DESTROYER DUCK™
No. 7
$1.50
$1.95 in Canada

STEVE GERBER & JACK KIRBY present **DESTROYER DUCK!** in

THE VAULT OF VIRUS!

BUZZ DIXON
WRITER

GARY KATO
ARTIST

ALFREDO ALCALA
INKER

STEVE GERBER
EDITOR

G. KATO, LETTERER

ODERFLA, COLORIST

MEMO FROM THE CRYPT: LAST ISSUE, PARAMILITARY PARAMEDICS KIDNAPPED MOVIE STAR CINNAMON CARTER TO A MYSTERIOUS PARALLELOGRAM-SHAPED LABORATORY COMPOUND ON AN UNCHARTED ISLAND IN THE PACIFIC. THERE, SHE WAS GREETED BY HER CAPTOR -- THE FIENDISH DR. PARAQUAT, A PARAPLEGIC -- AND HIS PET PARAKEET. THEY INFORMED THE TERRIFIED CINNAMON THAT SHE WOULD BE A PRISONER ON THE ISLAND FOR THE REST OF HER LIFE. HOWEVER, UNKNOWN TO PARAQUAT, THERE WERE STOWAWAYS ABOARD THE PLANE WHICH BROUGHT THE ACTRESS TO HIS TROPICAL PARADISE . . . !

TH-THEY'VE BROKEN OUT IN SORES! THEIR SKIN IS ROTTING OFF THEIR BONES!
WHAT ARE THEY--?!?
ZOMBIES -- OR DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES, MAYBE! HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW?
WHATEVER THEY ARE, THEY'RE DISGUSTING!
GUNCH!
HEEC E THEENGS LIKE THEES I SEE MANY TIMES WHEN I AM DROONK--
-- BUT NEVER BEFORE HOORPE WHEN I AM SOOBER!
NO OFFENSE, PABLO -- BUT HOW WOULDJA REMEMBER?
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN SOBER SINCE 1958!
SSWAK

THEY'RE HALF-DEAD! THEY DON'T FEEL PAIN! NO MATTER HOW HARD WE HIT, THEY KEEP ON COMING!
THIS CALLS FOR DRASTIC MEASURES..!
FLAMBÉE!!
BERYL'S CHERRY BOMB FINDS ITS MARK . . . !
AHH-H-H-NN!!
SHOOM!
OOOOOOOOOH . . . FIRE . . . GOOD! . . .
THE WEIRD CREATURES ABANDON THE FIGHT, AND, LIKE MOTHS DRAWN TO A CANDLE . . .
FIRE SAVES! . . . FIRE IS WAY . . . TO FREEDOM!. . .
I DON'T GET IT! FIRST THEY ATTACK US -- AN' NOW THEY WANNA DIE ?!
WHO'S COMPLAINING ? BETTER THEY'RE SUICIDAL THAN HOMICIDAL !
CHAR-BROIL, YA CREEPS !!
WE GOTTA FIND A PLACE TO HIDE -- AN' DOPE OUT A PLAN!
THE JUNGLE'S CRAWLIN' WITH THOSE THINGS -- AN' BERYL'S PHEROMONES ATTRACT 'EM!
3

WE'LL NEVER GET INTO THAT LAB COMPOUND TO RESCUE CINNAMON CARTER UNLESS --
DOOK! LOOK! A VEELLAGE OR SUMTHEENG --!
WHAT IF IT'S THEIRS?
UNNGH NOT LIKELY-- UNLESS THERE'S A GRAVEYARD IN HERE!
HEY, LI'L PAL-- LOOK! MORE NEW ARRIVALS!
HUH...?!
HOWDY, MATES!
PSST! DOOK! THEY HAB THE SAME SORES AS THOSE THEENGS OU'SIDE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
HER -- AS A MATTER OF FACT!
CINNAMON CARTER RIGHT? YOUR LAWYER -- HOLMES -- SENT US TO RESCUE YOU!
I -- I CAN'T GO HOME SOB EVER AGAIN --!
SOB NONE OF US CAN!! WE ALL HAVE -- BLACK SYPH!!
IT'S A VENEREAL DISEASE -- HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS -- AND SOB TOTALLY INCURABLE!

I CAUGHT IT FROM A MILLIONAIRE WHO PROMISED TO TAKE CARE OF ME AND HELP MY CAREER--
"--HOWARD THURSTON THE FOURTH!"
CINNAMON! PLEASE--DON'T BLAME ME! I CAUGHT IT FROM MY WIFE--
"--DOVEY!"
AND I'M NOT SORRY! YOU CHEATED ON ME FOR YEARS WITH YOUR STARLETS! MY ONLY AFFAIR BEGAN AS AN INTELLECTUAL ATTRACTION--
"--TO PROFESSOR JOHN RUSSELL!"
AND IT WOULD'VE REMAINED PLATONIC, MRS. THURSTON, IF I'D KNOWN I'D CONTRACTED BLACK GYPH--
"--FROM MY STUDENT, MARY JANE BITZNER!"
GEE, PROFESSOR--ISN'T IT TIME WE FORGIVE AND FORGET? AND HOPE FOR THE BEST? YOU DON'T SEE ME BLAMING--
"--MY FIANCÉ, GALLAGHER!"
SHUCKS, MARY JANE--YOU KNOW I'M NOT PROMISCUOUS. THE ONLY PEOPLE I EVER SLEPT WITH WERE YOU AND--
"--THE CAPTAIN!"
≥a-henh-henh-henh!≤
AW, GOSH--Y'KNOW HOW LONESOME THOSE LONG SEA VOYAGES CAN GET...!
YOU'RE ALL EACH OTHERS' ...PARAMOURS?!?
TERRIFIC! KILL-CRAZED ZOMBIES OUTSIDE THE WALL--
--AND A BUNCH 'A DISEASED HOMOS AND HOT-PANTS IN HERE!
AS DUKE PROPOUNDS HIS VIEWS ON THE TOPIC OF ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLES...
...UNFRIENDLY EYES BECOME AWARE OF HIS PRESENCE!

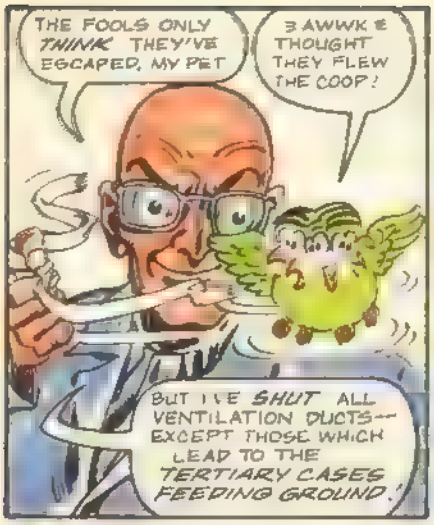
THE EYES OF DR. PARAQUAT!
CAPTAIN ABLE -- WE HAVE INTRUDERS IN THE NEW-COMERS' VILLAGE! I WANT THEM CAPTURED-- AND DELIVERED TO ME IMMEDIATELY!
AWWK ROUND 'EM UP! HAUL 'EM IN!
YOU SHOOR THE WATER EES SAFE TO DREENK? WHAT ABOUT THE CHERMS!?
PLEASE! WE'RE NOT LIKE THOSE POOR DEVILS IN THE JUNGLE! THEY'RE BEYOND HELP!
BUT OUR DISEASE IS STILL IN THE EARLY STAGES! DR. PARAQUAT MAY EVEN CURE US-- SOMEDAY.
WHO IS THIS PARAQUAT CHARACTER? WHY'D HE HAVE TO BRING YOU HERE?
SIGH JUST SIT BACK, DUKE, AND YOU'LL HEAR A TALE -- A TALE OF A FATEFUL TRIP...
IT STARTED FROM A TROPIC PORT, ABOARD--
BUT BEFORE THE CAPTAIN CAN CONTINUE...
FREEZE, TURKEY--
--OR I'LL FILL YOU WITH HOT LEAD STUFFING!
GASP D-DON'T PANIC! M-MAYBE THEY'VE GOT GOOD NEWS! MAYBE THEY'VE FOUND THE CURE --!
YEAH, RIGHT -- AN' MAYBE YOUR MAMA RAISED YOU TO BE A REALIST!

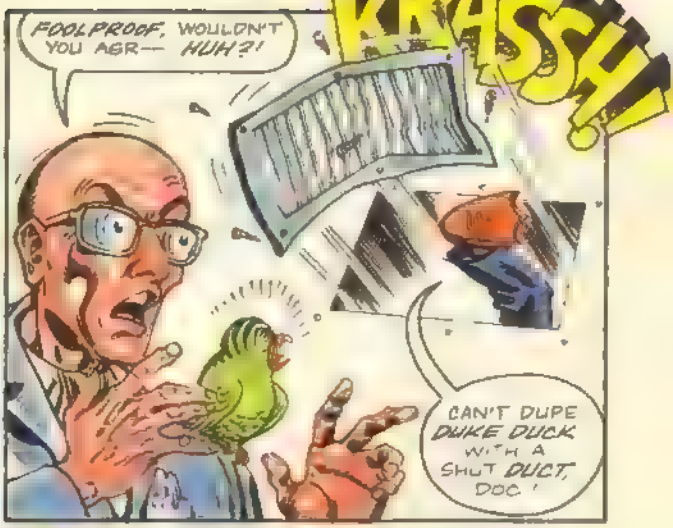
QUAAAGH !!
LOOK CLOSE, BUG-BRAIN -- THIS IS A DUCK, NOT A TURKEY--
INTERESTING SYNDROME. HE ACTUALLY BELIEVES HE'S A WATERFOWL.
PITY HE WON'T LIVE LONG ENOUGH FOR DEPTH ANALYSIS.
--A DUCK WHO WANTS ANSWERS!
WHO'S PARAQUAT? WHAT'S BLACK SYPH? WHAT'S GOIN' ON IN THAT LABORATOR--
--EEE-YOWW!!
BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA
PERSONALLY, I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE A DUCK, A TURKEY, OR PRINCESS DI--
--ONE FUNNY MOVE AND I'LL BLOW YOUR MOTHER-PLUCKIN' BEAK OFF!

AND SO, AFTER ROUTINE DECONTAMINATION PROCEDURES...
WELCOME TO BLACK SYPH ISLAND. I DO HOPE YOU FIND OUR LITTLE HIDEAWAY HOSPITABLE...
...BECAUSE YOU WON'T BE LEAVING. EVER.
AWWK GET USED TO IT! YOU'RE STUCK!
UH-HUH. I KEEP HEARIN' ABOUT BLACK SYPH, BUT NOBODY WANTS TO EXPLAIN IT.
UNDERSTANDABLY. IT HARDLY MAKES FOR PLEASANT CONVERSATION.
"BLACK SYPH" IS A PARTICULARLY VIRULENT STRAIN OF SYPHILIS THAT SPRANG UP IN VIETNAM DURING THE WAR...
BAR
GENETICALLY WARPED BY AGENT ORANGE, IT PROVED RESISTANT TO PENICILLIN OR ANY OTHER TREATMENT"--
--AND MORE CATASTROPHIC THAN LEPROSY IN ITS EFFECTS UPON THE BODY.
AWWK TRULY DISGUSTING!
I CAN FIGURE THE REST. THE VICTIMS BECAME A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEM FOR THE GOVERNMENT.
YOU COULDN'T SEND 'EM HOME-- AND YOU COULDN'T SAY WHY!
SO YOU SHUNTED 'EM OFF TO THIS ISLAND-- WHERE THEY COULDN'T INFECT ANYBODY--
--AN' JUST LET 'EM DEGENERATE, RIGHT? 'TIL THE DISEASE HIT THE TERTIARY STAGE-- AN' THEY DIED!

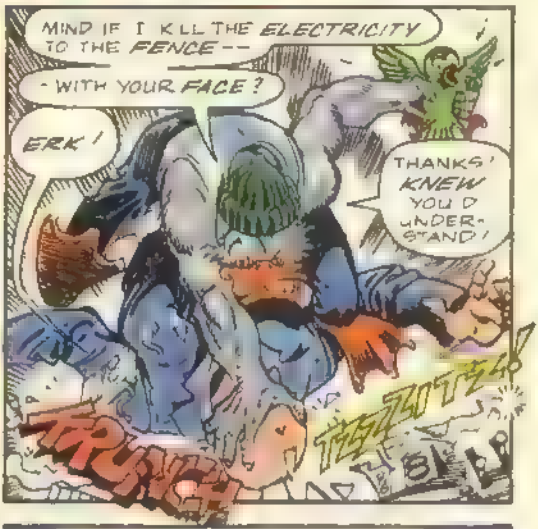
WE HAVEN'T ABANDONED THESE MEN! THEY'RE UNDER TOP-SECRET QUARANTINE TO SAFEGUARD THE PUBLIC HEALTH--
--WHILE OUR SEARCH FOR A CURE CONTINUES!
"TOP SECRET"-- MEANIN' THEY'RE LISTED AS MISSING IN ACTION-- NO WORD TO THE FAMILIES THAT THEY'RE ALIVE, RIGHT?
PRETTY SWEET DEAL. NO SCANDAL FOR THE BIGWIGS-- AN' YOU GET A PRIVATE TROPICAL PARADISE --AT THE TAXPAYER'S EXPENSE!
NUMBER 2083 IN A SERIES OF GOVERNMENT PECADILLOS....!
AWWK! PECADILLO: A FORMULATION OF MEGA-NUTRIENTS, FUNGI, AND ANTI-BIOTICS CONSISTING OF --
WHOK!
mwuurrk
LET 'IM TALK, DOC-- HE WAS MAKIN' MORE SENSE THAN YOU!
ARE THOSE KNOBBY LITTLE FISTS SUPPOSED TO FRIGHTEN ME, MR. DUCK?
FFT FFT FFT
OW-WW!!
UNNGH!!
CARAMBA!!
ZTT! ZTT! ZTT!
9

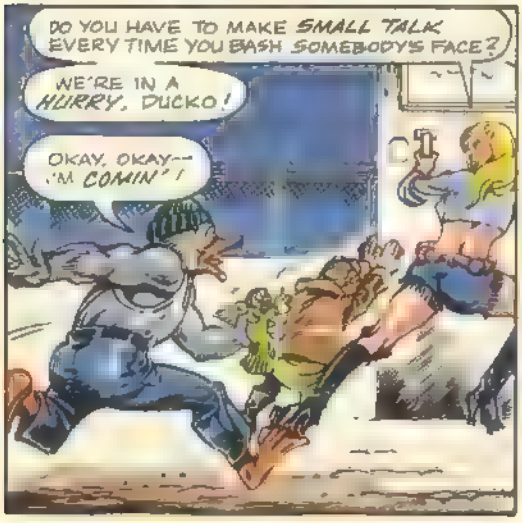
HOURS LATER.
A EEE -- MY HEAD -- SHE HOORTS...!
MINE DOESN'T-- I'M JUST-- DIZZY--!
THAT'S 'CAUSE -- YOU'RE ONLY FEELIN'- THE EFFECTS OF THE DART!
PABLO'S GOT -- A HANGOVER BESIDES--!
LOCKED... OF COURSE..
PARAQUAT... WILL PROBABLY KEEP US IN HERE... FOR LIFE...!
AN' THAT-- PROB'LY WON'T BE FOR LONG--!
I GOT A HUNCH HE'S HIDIN' SOMETHING -- AN' NOT JUST FROM US --
-- FROM HIS GOVERNMENT CRONIES, TOO!
THAT PARAKEET STARTED TO SAY SOMETHING -- BEFORE PARAQUAT PUNCHED HIM OUT!
SOUNDED TO ME LIKE A MEDICAL FORMULA!
YOU DON'T THINK-- HE'S WITHHOLDING THE CURE?!
MAYBE -- AN I GOT A PLAN TO FIND OUT!
HE THINKS HE'S SO-O-O SMART. BUT HE'S JUST A STUPID BIRD -- LIKE YOU, PRECIOUS!
DON'T YOU DARE TELL MY SECRETS TO STRANGERS AGAIN. JUST PARAPHRASE ME, AS USUAL
--OR YOU'RE GEEK FOOD!
MMMPH!

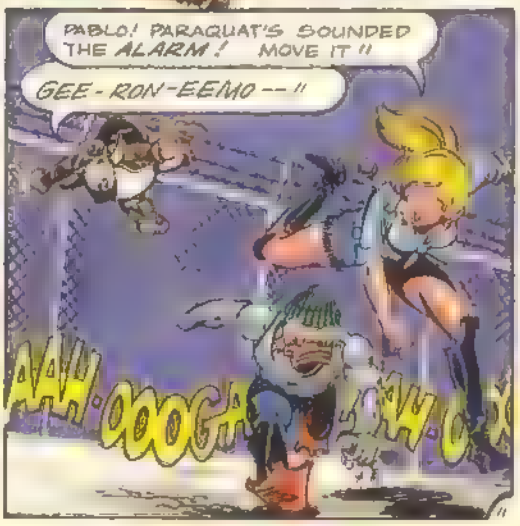

THE FOOLS ONLY THINK THEY'VE ESCAPED, MY PET
SAWWKE THOUGHT THEY FLEW THE COOP!
BUT I'VE SHUT ALL VENTILATION DUCTS-- EXCEPT THOSE WHICH LEAD TO THE TERTIARY CASES FEEDING GROUND!


FOOLPROOF, WOULDN'T YOU AGR-- HUH?!
KRASSH!
CAN'T DUPE DUKE DUCK WITH A SHUT DUCT, DOC!

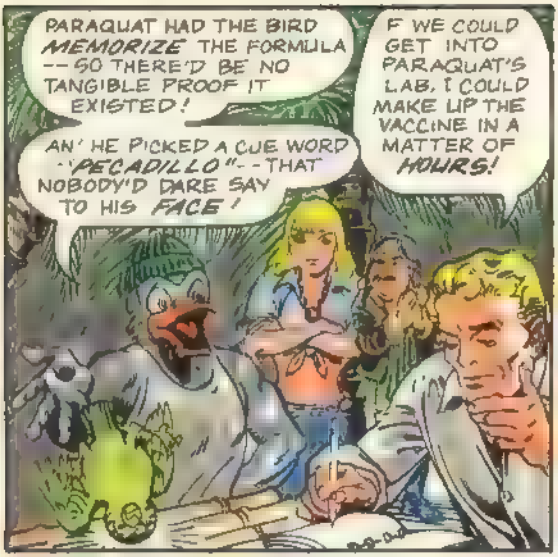
THE WHOLE ESCAPE SEEMED TOO EASY-- SO WE FORCED OPEN A CLOSED DUCT AN' CRAWLED BACK HERE!
SUNNGH RELEASE THAT BIRD, YOU MANIAC!
SAWWKE HELP! LEGGO! RAPE!

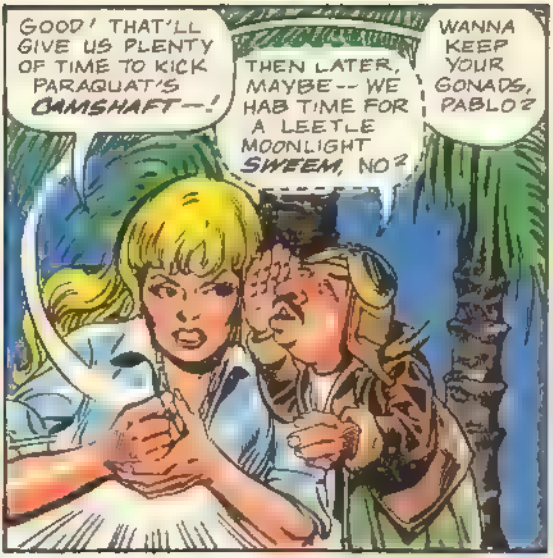

MIND IF I KILL THE ELECTRICITY TO THE FENCE--
-WITH YOUR FACE?
ERK!
THANKS! KNEW YOU'D UNDERSTAND!
CRUNCH
TSSUTT!

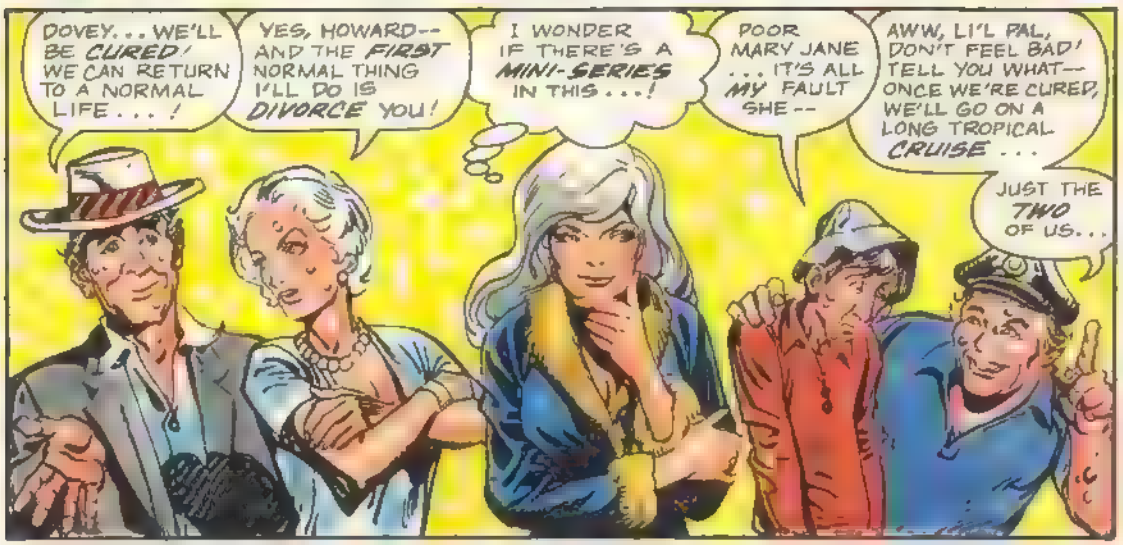

DO YOU HAVE TO MAKE SMALL TALK EVERY TIME YOU BASH SOMEBODY'S FACE?
WE'RE IN A HURRY, DUCKO!
OKAY, OKAY-- 'M COMIN'!

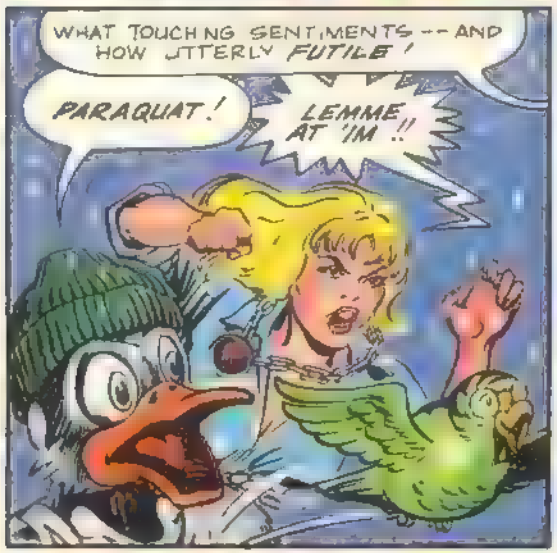

PABLO! PARAQUAT'S SOUNDED THE ALARM! MOVE IT!!
GEE-RON-EEMO--!!
AAHH-OOOGA

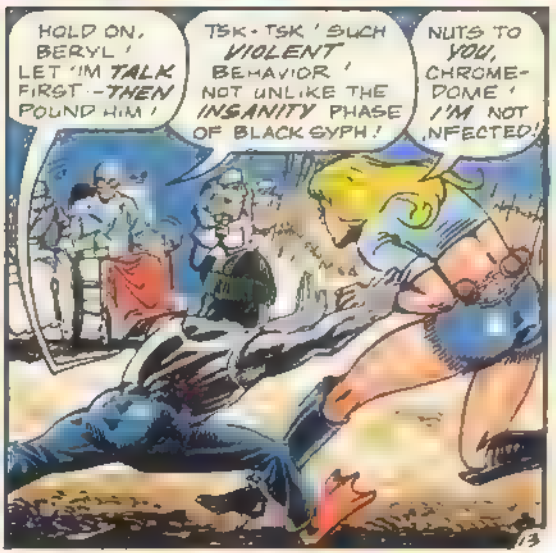
I DON'T LIKE IT-- THE VILLAGE IS TOO QUIET!
WHAT JOU EXPECT, DOOK --A PARTY? VD EES NOOTHING TO CLAP ABOUT!
=GROAN= HE THINKS IT COULD BE A TRAP, PABLO!
CARAMBA!
OH MY GOD...!
MARY JANE. SHE-- SHE--
--HANGED HERSELF! =CHOKE= SHE ALWAYS TRIED TO STAY CHEERFUL... OPTIMISTIC ABOUT A CURE...
THIS MORNING, SHE BROKE OUT =SOB= IN BLACK SORES ... AND JUST GAVE UP HOPE.
NUTS! I MAY BE HOLDIN' THE CURE-- RIGHT, IN MY HAND.
=AWWK=
SING, TWERP-- PECADILLO!
=AWWK= PECADILLO: A FORMULATION OF MEGA-NUTRIENTS, FUNGI, AND ANTI-BIOTICS CONSISTING OF --
GOOD LORD! THE PARAKEET'S RECITING A METHOD OF TREATMENT FOR THE DISEASE!
IT'S SUFFERED-- AH--EXTENSIVE DAMAGE, SIR! WE CAN'T ESTIMATE HOW LONG--
THEN WE CAN'T WAIT! WE'LL OPEN THE COMPOUND GATE BY HAND--
--SNEAK THROUGH THE JUNGLE --AND TAKE THAT MEDDLING MALLARD BY SURPRISE!
12


PARAQUAT HAD THE BIRD MEMORIZE THE FORMULA -- SO THERE'D BE NO TANGIBLE PROOF IT EXISTED!
AN' HE PICKED A CUE WORD -- "PECADILLO" -- THAT NOBODY'D DARE SAY TO HIS FACE!
IF WE COULD GET INTO PARAQUAT'S LAB, I COULD MAKE UP THE VACCINE IN A MATTER OF HOURS!


GOOD! THAT'LL GIVE US PLENTY OF TIME TO KICK PARAQUAT'S CAMSHAFT--!
THEN LATER, MAYBE -- WE HAB TIME FOR A LEETLE MOONLIGHT SWEEM, NO?
WANNA KEEP YOUR GONADS, PABLO?


DOVEY... WE'LL BE CURED! WE CAN RETURN TO A NORMAL LIFE...!
YES, HOWARD-- AND THE FIRST NORMAL THING I'LL DO IS DIVORCE YOU!
I WONDER IF THERE'S A MINI-SERIES IN THIS...!
POOR MARY JANE ... IT'S ALL MY FAULT SHE--
AWW, LI'L PAL, DON'T FEEL BAD! TELL YOU WHAT-- ONCE WE'RE CURED, WE'LL GO ON A LONG TROPICAL CRUISE...
JUST THE TWO OF US...

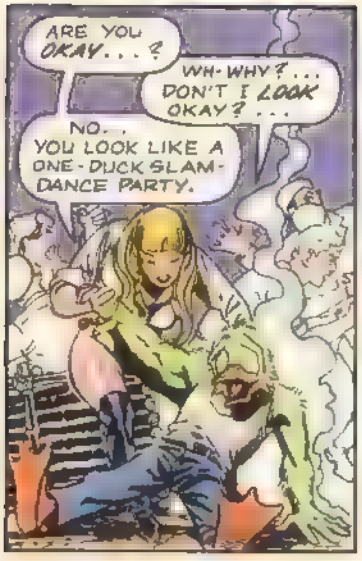

WHAT TOUCHING SENTIMENTS -- AND HOW UTTERLY FUTILE!
PARAQUAT!
LEMME AT 'IM!!

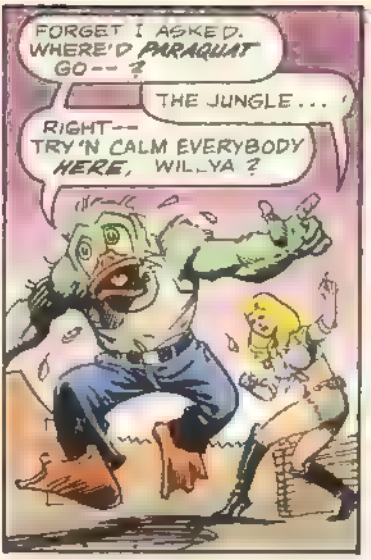

HOLD ON, BERYL! LET 'IM TALK FIRST -- THEN POUND HIM!
TSK-TSK! SUCH VIOLENT BEHAVIOR, NOT UNLIKE THE INSANITY PHASE OF BLACK SYPH!
NUTS TO YOU, CHROME-DOME! I'M NOT INFECTED!

ARE YOU SURE, DEAR? MY HYPO-DARTS MIGHT HAVE CONTAINED A FREE SAMPLE OF THE VIRUS!
AFTER ALL, I'VE BEEN MANAGING THE DISEASE FOR QUITE SOME TIME. EVERY KNOWN VICTIM WAS BROUGHT TO THIS ISLAND.
THAT'S WHY THERE'S BEEN NOT A SINGLE CASE REPORTED IN THE U. S. SINCE THE END OF THE WAR.
QUAAAGH! THEN-- HOW COULD THESE PEOPLE CONTRACT IT-- TEN YEARS LATER?!
"I RE-INTRODUCED THE VIRUS INTO THE GENERAL POPULATION -- THROUGH ONE OF MY EMPLOYEES.
"THE CAPTAIN RAN SUPPLIES FOR ME -- UNTIL HE RECEIVED WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS A FLU SHOT"
YOU SEE, AS TIME PASSED AND THE ORIGINAL CASES DIED OUT -- SO DID MY FUNDING.
BLACK SYPH WAS NO LONGER A POLITICAL TIME-BOMB.
NEEDLESS TO SAY, THAT CHANGED WHEN A NEW OUTBREAK WAS CONFIRMED IN THE STATES.
GIVEN THE FUROR OVER AIDS AND HERPES, MY... BACKERS FEARED AN ALL-OUT PANIC. THEY TRIPLED MY BUDGET.
NATURALLY, THEY REMAIN IGNORANT OF THE VACCINE I DEVELOPED SOME NINE YEARS AGO.
WHY SHOULD I PUT MYSELF OUT OF A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR BUSINESS --
-- FOR THE SAKE OF THESE MINDLESS, PROMISCUOUS, PORCINE DREGS?
OF ALL THE CRUMMY...!

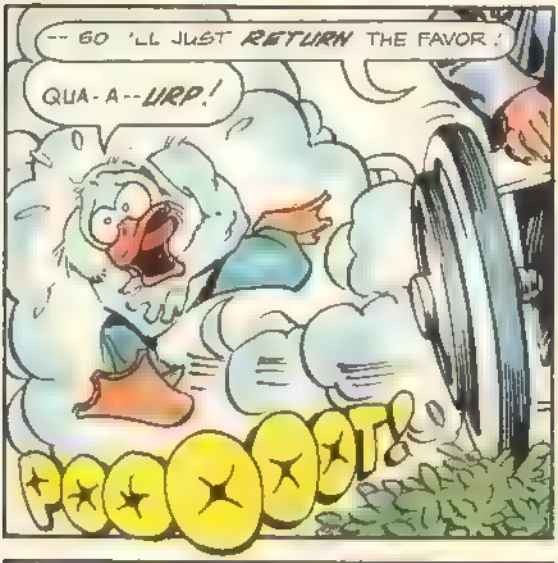
WHY, YOU--BASTARD! HOW DARE YOU CALL MY DOVEY A DREG!?!
I'M A STAR! I DON'T HAVE TO PUT UP W TH THIS CRAP!
MY GIRL CROAKED BECAUSE OF YOU!!
CAPTAIN ABLE! SHOOT TO KILL!! THEY MUSN T LGH: TOUCH ME!
CHUCK YOU, FARLEY JUST HOLD 'EM BACK, MEN!
ROGER! DON'T HURT 'EM --BUT DON T LET 'EM KISS YOU!
YOUR WH TE BERETS PUNKED OUT ON YOU, PARA-DOGJAT!
AND NOW YOU'RE GONNA LEARN A VALUABLE LESSON--
--DON'T MUCK WITH THIS DUCK!!

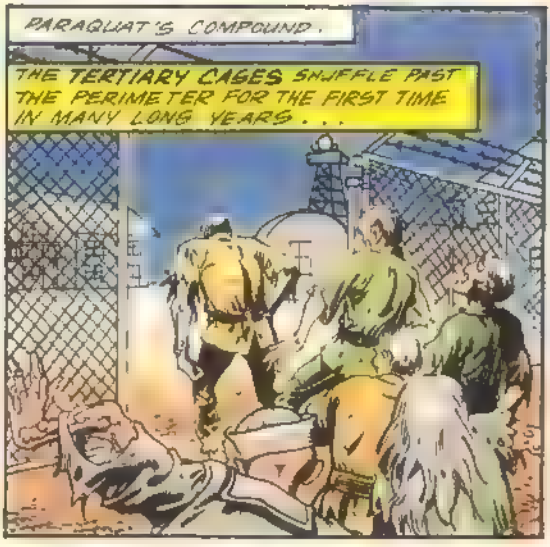
ALAS, I REMAIN UNCONVINCED THAT YOU REPRESENT ANY MEANINGFUL THREAT.
FFT! FFT! FFT! FFT! FFT!
THAT'S JAKE BY ME!
UNGH!
ZAP ZAP ZAP
WHIRR
I GOT TEN LITTLE CONVINCERS I'M ACHIN' TO WRAP AROUND YOUR THROAT!
TEN?! GOODNESS--- I AM IN TROUBLE!
I HAVE ONLY TWO!
QUA-AA-UGH!
BZZZZZZZAP
DUKE--"
FLAMB-- UH, NO.
...LA TABLE"
quooregh
THWAM!!

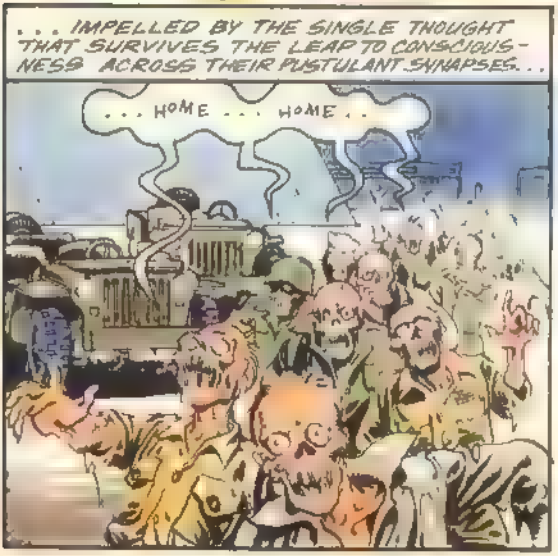

ARE YOU OKAY . . . ?
WH-WHY? . . . DON'T I LOOK OKAY? . . .
NO. . YOU LOOK LIKE A ONE-DUCK SLAM-DANCE PARTY.


FORGET I ASKED. WHERE'D PARAQUAT GO-- ?
THE JUNGLE . . .
RIGHT-- TRY'N CALM EVERYBODY HERE, WILLYA ?

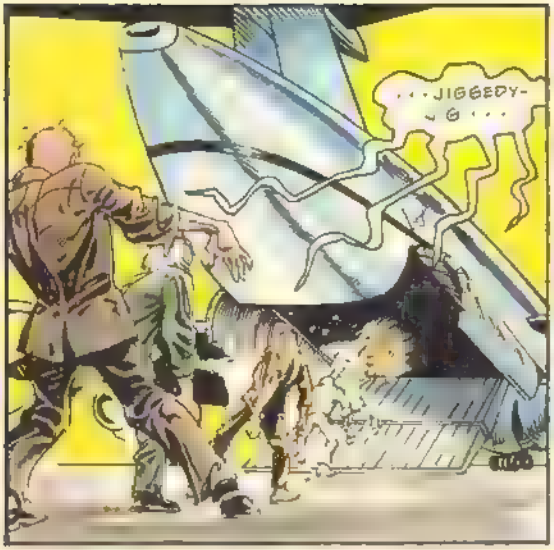
HEY, PARA-SQUAT-- !!
HEAVENS! YOU ARE A MESS! IN FACT, YOU MAKE ME NAUSEOUS--

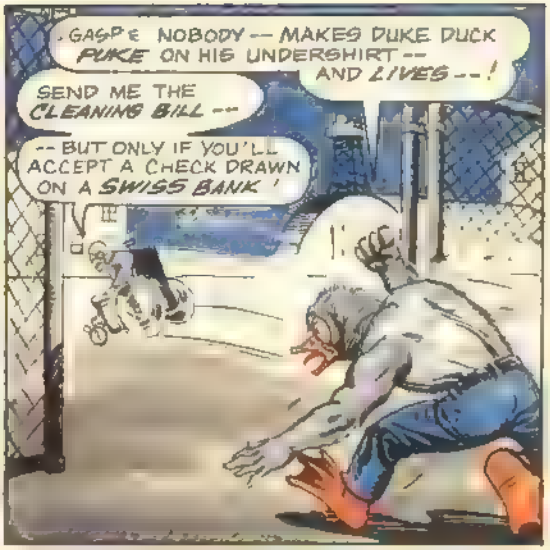

-- SO 'LL JUST RETURN THE FAVOR!
QUA-A--URP!
POOOOOT!


PARAQUAT'S COMPOUND.
THE TERTIARY CAGES SHUFFLE PAST THE PERIMETER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY LONG YEARS . . .

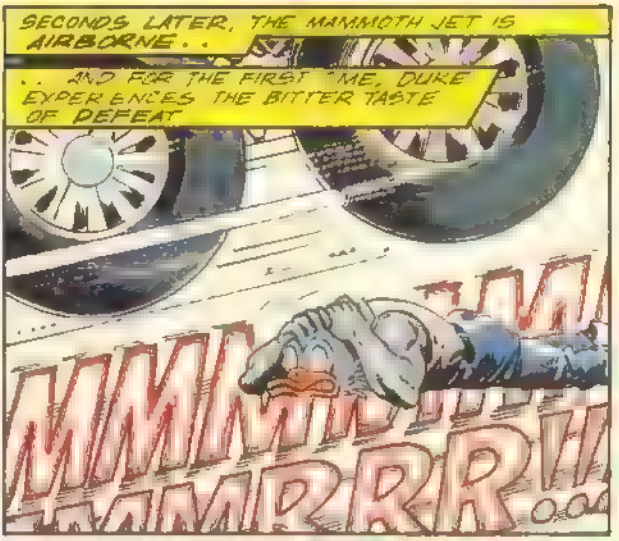

. . . IMPELLED BY THE SINGLE THOUGHT THAT SURVIVES THE LEAP TO CONSCIOUSNESS ACROSS THEIR PUSTULANT SYNAPSES . . .
. . . HOME . . . HOME . .

. . . HOME . . . HOME . . . HOME AGAIN . . . HOME AGAIN . .


...JIGGEDY-G...

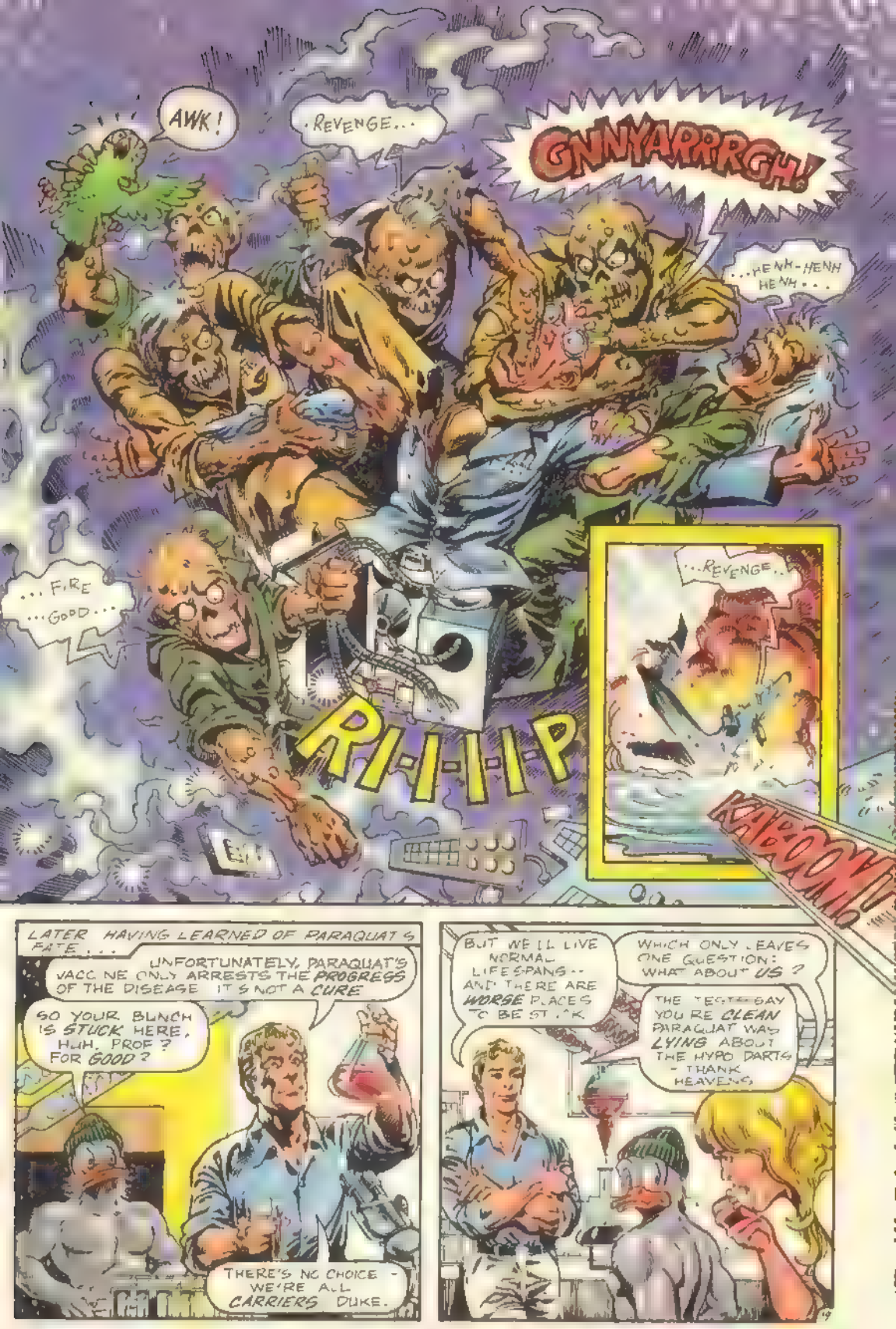

GASP! NOBODY -- MAKES DUKE DUCK PUKE ON HIS UNDERSHIRT -- AND LIVES --!
SEND ME THE CLEANING BILL --
-- BUT ONLY IF YOU'LL ACCEPT A CHECK DRAWN ON A SWISS BANK!

AND NOW, I MUST BE GO NG!
TA-TA
AWWK! SAYONARA!

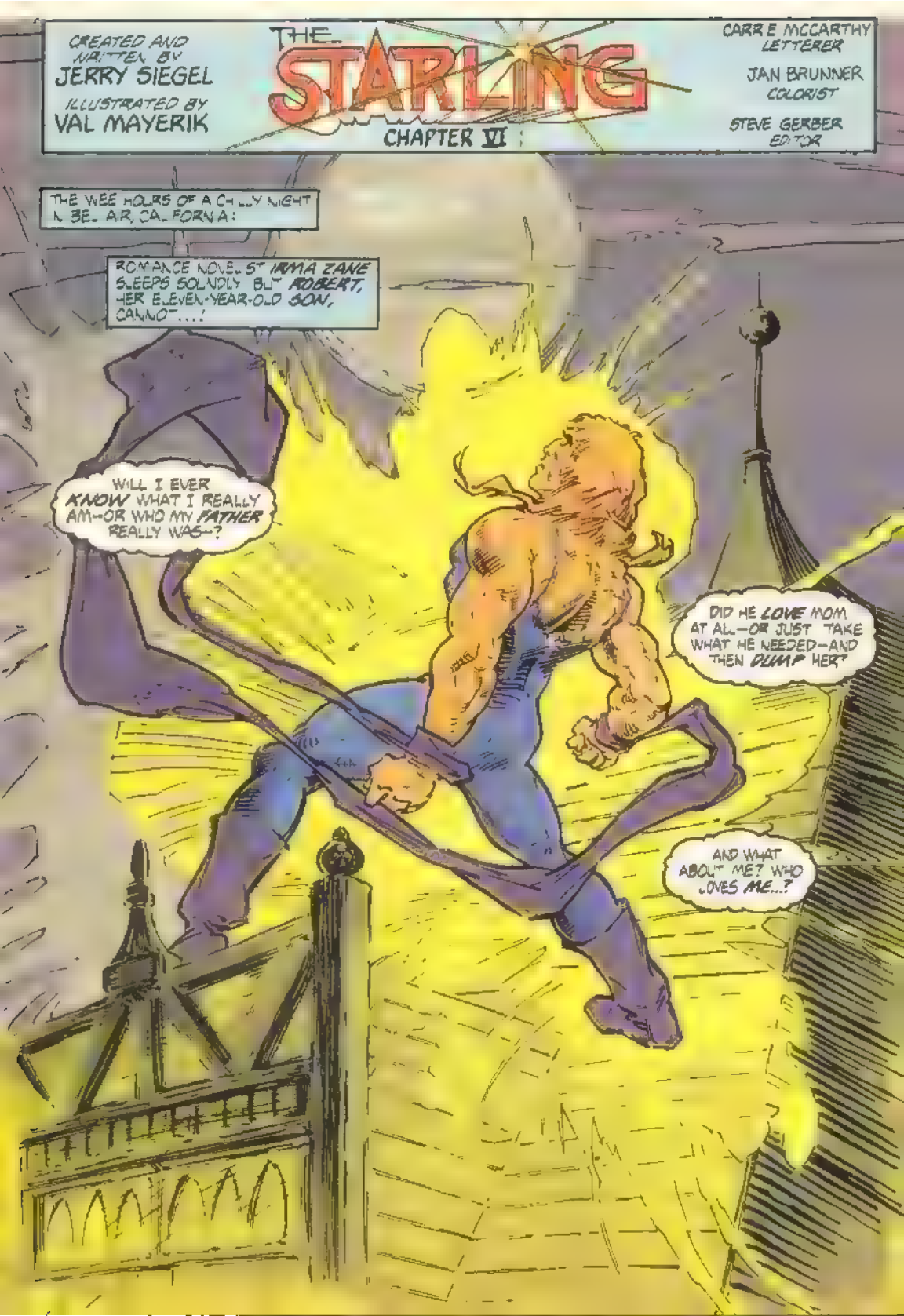

SECONDS LATER, THE MAMMOTH JET IS AIRBORNE..
.. AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, DUKE EXPERIENCES THE BITTER TASTE OF DEFEAT
MMMMMMMRRR!!

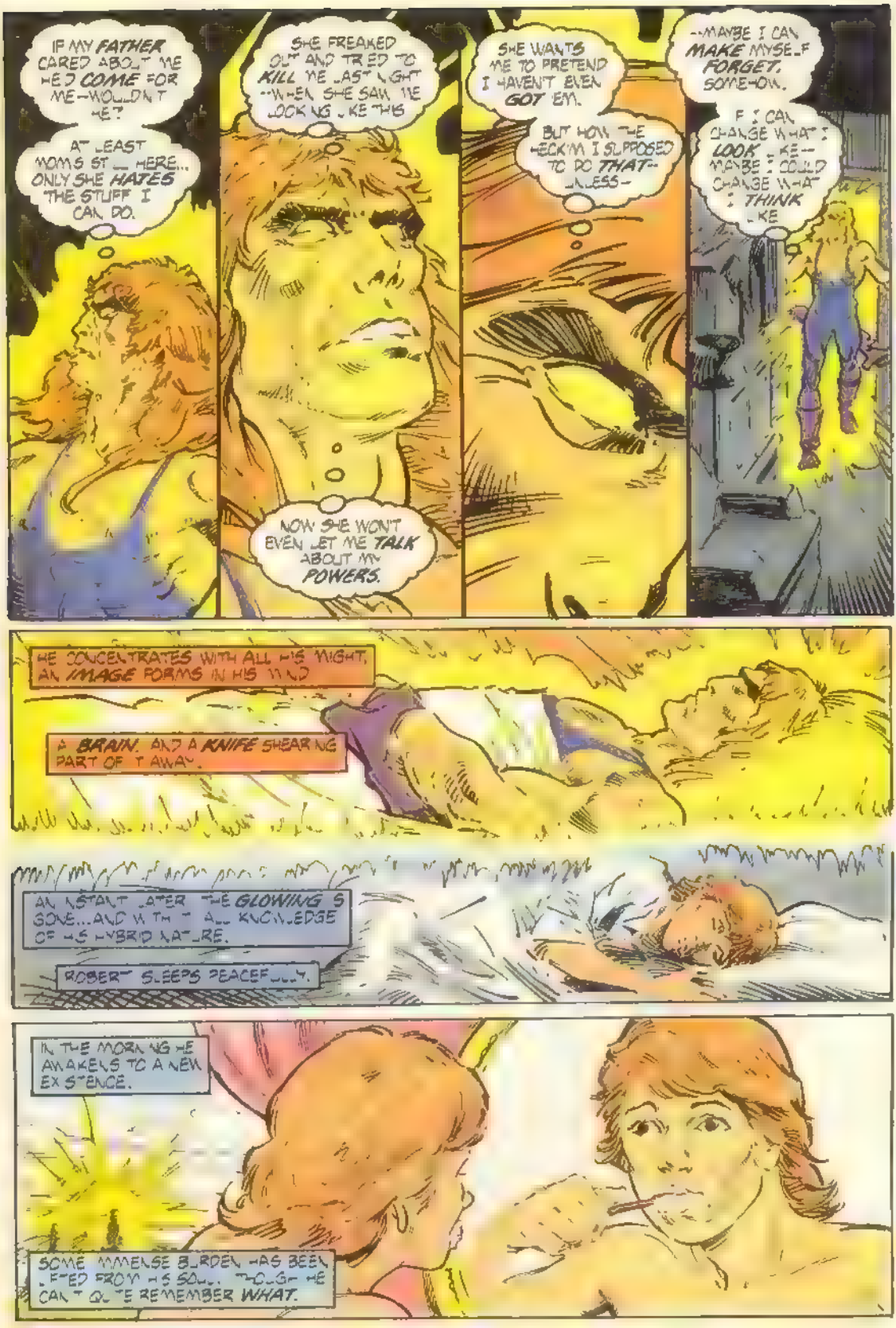
A CAREFUL PHYSIC AN PLANS FOR EVERY EMERGENCY EH, MY PET?
TWEET! BE PREPARED--!

NOT EVEN ABLE KNEW MY LOWER EXTREMITIES WERE PROGRAMMED AND EQUIPPED TO FLY THIS--
WHAT THE..?


AWK!
...REVENGE...
GNNYARRRGH!
...HENH-HENH HENH...
...FIRE ...GOOD...
R-I-I-I-P
...REVENGE...
KABOOM!
LATER HAVING LEARNED OF PARAQUAT'S FATE...
UNFORTUNATELY, PARAQUAT'S VACCINE ONLY ARRESTS THE PROGRESS OF THE DISEASE IT'S NOT A CURE
SO YOUR BUNCH IS STUCK HERE, HUH, PROF? FOR GOOD?
THERE'S NO CHOICE - WE'RE ALL CARRIERS DUKE.
BUT WE'LL LIVE NORMAL LIFESPANS -- AND THERE ARE WORSE PLACES TO BE STUCK.
WHICH ONLY LEAVES ONE QUESTION: WHAT ABOUT US?
THE TEST SAY YOU'RE CLEAN PARAQUAT WAS LYING ABOUT THE HYPO DARTS - THANK HEAVENS

OKAY.. LET'S RADIO HOLMES TO SEND US A SEAPLANE OUTTA HERE.
YOU GO AHEAD. I'LL FIND PABLO.
HE WAS SO FRIGHTENED ABOUT HAVING THE DISEASE-- HE WENT INTO THE JUNGLE TO DRINK HIMSELF TO DEATH.
NEW YORK. . SEVERAL DAYS LATER.
WHOEVER'S RESPONSIBLE WILL PAY FOR THEIR NEGLECT, DUKE. WE'LL SUE ON BEHALF OF THE INNOCENT VICTIMS.
NAH, LET IT RIDE. SOME OF 'EM AIN'T EXACTLY "INNOCENT," HOLMES
BESIDES- YOU CAN'T BRING 'EM BACK TO TESTIFY.
BRAD! OPAL! OPEN UP! WE'RE HOME!!
NOK NOK NOK
BOOOGH -- BOOOGA!!
=queggh=
HA! THAT'LL TEACH YOU POOKFACES! YOU WON'T LEAVE ME ALONE WITH BRAD NEXT TIME-- WILLYA?!?
=HA-HA=
=HEE HEE=
THERE'S NOT GONNA BE A NEXT TIME, YOU MISERABLE LITTLE BRAT!
TONIGHT, YOU FREEZE TO DEATH!!
HUNH --?!?
SKUNNCH
D-DUKE -- L-LEMME IN! . . . IT'S C-C-COLD OUT HERE! . . . DUKE? . . .
DAMMIT, DUCK-- I MEAN IT!!-- LEMME IN!!--
=WAAA-AA-AH!!=
THE END


CREATED AND WRITTEN BY
JERRY SIEGEL
ILLUSTRATED BY
VAL MAYERIK
THE STARLING
CHAPTER VI
CARRIE MCCARTHY
LETTERER
JAN BRUNNER
COLORIST
STEVE GERBER
EDITOR
THE WEE HOURS OF A CHILLY NIGHT IN BEL AIR, CALIFORNIA:
ROMANCE NOVELIST IRMA ZANE SLEEPS SOUNDLY BUT ROBERT, HER ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD SON, CANNOT....!
WILL I EVER KNOW WHAT I REALLY AM—OR WHO MY FATHER REALLY WAS—?
DID HE LOVE MOM AT ALL—OR JUST TAKE WHAT HE NEEDED—AND THEN DUMP HER?
AND WHAT ABOUT ME? WHO LOVES ME...?


IF MY FATHER CARED ABOUT ME HE'D COME FOR ME--WOULDN'T HE?
AT LEAST MOM'S STILL HERE... ONLY SHE HATES THE STUFF I CAN DO.
SHE FREAKED OUT AND TRIED TO KILL ME LAST NIGHT --WHEN SHE SAW ME LOOKING LIKE THIS
NOW SHE WON'T EVEN LET ME TALK ABOUT MY POWERS.
SHE WANTS ME TO PRETEND I HAVEN'T EVEN GOT 'EM.
BUT HOW THE HECK'M I SUPPOSED TO DO THAT-- UNLESS--
--MAYBE I CAN MAKE MYSELF FORGET. SOMEHOW.
IF I CAN CHANGE WHAT I LOOK LIKE-- MAYBE I COULD CHANGE WHAT I THINK LIKE
HE CONCENTRATES WITH ALL HIS MIGHT, AN IMAGE FORMS IN HIS MIND
A BRAIN. AND A KNIFE SHEARING PART OF IT AWAY.
AN INSTANT LATER THE GLOWING IS GONE...AND WITH IT ALL KNOWLEDGE OF HIS HYBRID NATURE.
ROBERT SLEEPS PEACEFULLY.
IN THE MORNING HE AWAKENS TO A NEW EXISTENCE.
SOME IMMENSE BURDEN HAS BEEN LIFTED FROM HIS SOUL. THOUGH HE CAN'T QUITE REMEMBER WHAT.

IN THE COURSE OF THE NEXT TWO YEARS EVEN THAT VAGUE RECOLLECTION FADES
...CROWDED OUT OF CONSCIOUSNESS BY THE DAILY CONCERNS OF AN AVERAGE ADOLESCENT.
ALICE--WHAT'S WRONG? I ONLY ASKED IF YOU WANNA GO TO THE MOVIES!
WHY'M I GETTIN THE PLUSH?
CAUSE I'M NOT INTERESTED ZALE. I WANT SOMEBODY SPECIAL, YKNOW?
OH REALLY VAN HALEN'S GONNA CALL ALL DAY NOW. I'M SURE
OR YOU COULD HOLD OUT FOR A SUPERHERO--LIKE ONE A THOSE D-N-AGENTS.
EAT A 70S LOG AND DIE, ZALE

SOMEBODY SPECIAL."
WHAT THE HELL DOES SHE WANT?!
I DON'T DRESS WEIRD : CAN DANCE. MY GRADES ARE OKAY. MY MOM'S RICH...
ROBERT!! WAKE UP!!
FIRE--!!
HUHNNH...?
MOM...HOW RE WE GONNA GET OUT? THE WHOLE HOUSE S GOIN UP.
YOUR POWERS, ROBERT--USE THEM!! PUT OUT THE FIRE..
WHAT POWERS ..WHAT RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU CAN'T HATE ME THAT MUCH, CAN YOU--NOT ENOUGH TO SEE ME BURNED ALIVE?!
MOM, I SWEAR--I DON'T KNOW WHAT--
DON'T DO THIS TO ME ROBERT.
GLOW, DAMN YOU-- GLOW!!

AND THE DARK EMOTIONS AND SEETHING INTELLIGENCE BURIED WITH THOSE MEMORIES ALSO RESURFACE...
THE POWER IS MINE!
IF I WANT IT!
THE STING OF IRMA'S SLAP—AND THE ALL-TOO-FAMILIAR NOTE OF HYSTERIA IN HER VOICE—SHATTER THE BARRIERS ROBERT HAS ERECTED BETWEEN HIS CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE TRUTH.
ASTRAL FINGERS SEEM TO DIG INTO HIS SKULL, DREDGING LONG-SUPPRESSED MEMORIES BACK TO THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS.
I CAN SAVE US!
BUT WHY SHOULD I?
SO SHE CAN HATE ME AGAIN? SO SHE CAN MAKE ME WANT TO FORGET—AGAIN—WHAT I AM?
MAYBE IT'S BETTER TO DIE IN THE FLAMES... WITH HER...
...THAN TO KNOW I HAVE THESE POWERS AND CAN NEVER USE THEM!

I MADE MYSELF FORGET, MOM--ALL ABOUT MY ALIEN FATHER--AND MY POWERS. BUT I REMEMBER NOW. I CAN USE THE GLOW-POWER TO RESCUE US.
OHH... THANK GOD.
EXCEPT I WON'T.
NOT UNLESS YOU PROMISE...TO LET ME BE WHAT I HAVE TO BE!
WANNA LIVE, MOM?
YES! YES!! I PROMISE--ANYTHING!!!
THEN OUR BARGAIN IS SEALED!
LOOK, MOM, I'M GLOWING. I'M STARTING TO CHANGE.
LOOK, MOM--LOOK!
Y!!!!!!!!
SUDDENLY, A VILE STENCH PERMEATES THE AIR, AND IRMA ZANE GAPES IN REVULSION--
--AS ROBERT'S OOZING, MOTTLED, SEMI-LIQUID SUBSTANCE FLOWS TOWARD THE FLAMES!
AAH-HAA-HAAA

MOMENTS LATER, THE FIRE IS EXTINGUISHED.
NNNGGGG!
THE CLINGING, SICKLY-GREEN WADS OF ROBERT'S PUDDING-LIKE SUBSTANCE DROP FROM THE WALLS... AND OOZE ACROSS THE FLOOR...
...TO COLLECT AT THE FOOT OF THE STAIRWAY.
FIRE'S OUT, MOM.

FROM NOW ON, ROBERT...
REMEMBER YOUR PROMISE, MOM.
FROM NOW ON...
GLOW ALL YOU WANT! CHANGE ALL YOU WANT!
PERFORM ALL THE GHASTLY MIRACLES YOU WANT!
I TRIED TO SAVE YOUR SOUL!
WHEN YOU BURN IN HELL, REMEMBER...
THE CHOICE WAS YOURS!!
YOU'VE ALREADY PUT ME THROUGH HELL, MOTHER.
NOW, I WANT TO SEE WHAT THE HEAVENS LOOK LIKE...!
WORLDS BEYOND IMAGINING AWAIT ROBERT ZANE--WHEN THE MACABRE TALE OF THE STARLING CONTINUES--IN HIS OWN MAGAZINE--COMING SOON FROM ECLIPSE!